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## **Towns may be forced to send money to state**

Payson and Star Valley may be forced to dole out nearly \$85,000 to help alleviate the state's budget shortfall if a lawsuit filed by the Arizona League of Cities and Towns fails.

The league claims the provision in the state's budget is unconstitutional and state treasurer, Dean Martin, a defendant in the case agrees.

"The governor and legislature cannot raise taxes or log-roll provisions into the budget that violate the constitution," Martin said in a press release.

In June, after the state budget was approved by Gov. Janet Napolitano, the budget committee released estimates of what each Arizona city and county would have to pay into the general fund, totaling \$29.7 million to help the state's budget.

Based on population, Payson would pay \$75,474 and Star Valley \$9,799, according to the league.

Several weeks ago, the league filed a special action with the Supreme Court against the governor and treasurer stating that the budget is unconstitutional because it passed without a two-thirds vote by the house and senate.

Proposition 108 of the constitution requires a two-thirds vote from the legislature for anything that increases state revenue, including new taxes, fees and assessments.

On Nov. 24, Martin sent a letter to the solicitor general instructing her to file arguments in agreement with the league.

"Local governments are really just local taxpayers; this was a very deceptive way to try to shift the state's budget problems to local taxpayers," Martin said.

Martin also said in the letter he wanted the court to expand the case to include other violations of the constitution, including a \$45 surcharge on defensive driving school and \$165 surcharge on traffic-camera tickets.

Legislative director Jeff Kros said the league is very encouraged by Martin's positive response.

So far, no towns or cities have been instructed to pay the state, Kros said.

"I don't know logistically how they would do that," he said.

**by: Alexis Bechman**